**Theme paragraph writing**

As we discussed last week, each paragraph in a film essay should follow this structure:

**Topic Sentence:** This is your opening sentence and it tells the main idea for that paragraph.

**Explanation:** This is where you explain your topic sentence by adding more detail to your main idea.

**Examples:** These are specific examples/quotes from the text that support your ideas. Always explain what the example/quote shows about the character.

**Film technique:** This is where you highlight the specific film technique/s used by the film maker. Remember, your discussion must relate to the topic sentence. Don’t choose randomly. Camera angles (overhead shot, under shot etc.), lighting, sound, costume, visual motifs etc.

**Link:** This is where you conclude your paragraph by either making a final comment that connects to the topic sentence, OR to the overall topic, OR to the next paragraph. (For this activity, connect back to the topic sentence.) This can be as simple as writing the topic sentence in different words.

Your task: Write a paragraph each about the themes of **systematic discrimination** and **the dangers of genetic and scientific experimentation**. Follow the structure of the sample paragraph below. Don’t forget to write about important characters, scenes, key quotes and film techniques.

*Gattaca* explores the idea that, no matter what a person’s genetic destiny, it is their will and spirit which ultimately determine their path in life. The protagonist, Vincent is born with many perceived physical and mental failings – an invalid. The importance his society places upon genetic purity is reinforced throughout the film, with countless extreme close-up shots on fingernails, strands of hair, skin flakes and eyelashes. This motif shows a world in which only genetically engineered people – valids – are expected to achieve success. Yet Vincent manages to work his way to becoming an elite astronaut at Gattaca. He is a character who is utterly single-minded in achieving his goals; he ‘never (saves) anything for the swim back.’ Vincent triumphs over nature as represented by the ocean. Conversely, Vincent’s brother Anton is engineered to be physically and mentally elite and yet finds himself working in an industry peopled mostly by ‘invalids’. Another character who fails to live up to his genetic destiny is Jerome Morrow. He is engineered with ‘everything he needed’ to succeed in life, yet ends up paralysed, alcoholic, bitter and ultimately suicidal. He suffers under ‘the burden of perfection’ and lacks the willpower to succeed. These characters illustrate the central theme of *Gattaca*; that there is ‘no gene for fate.’